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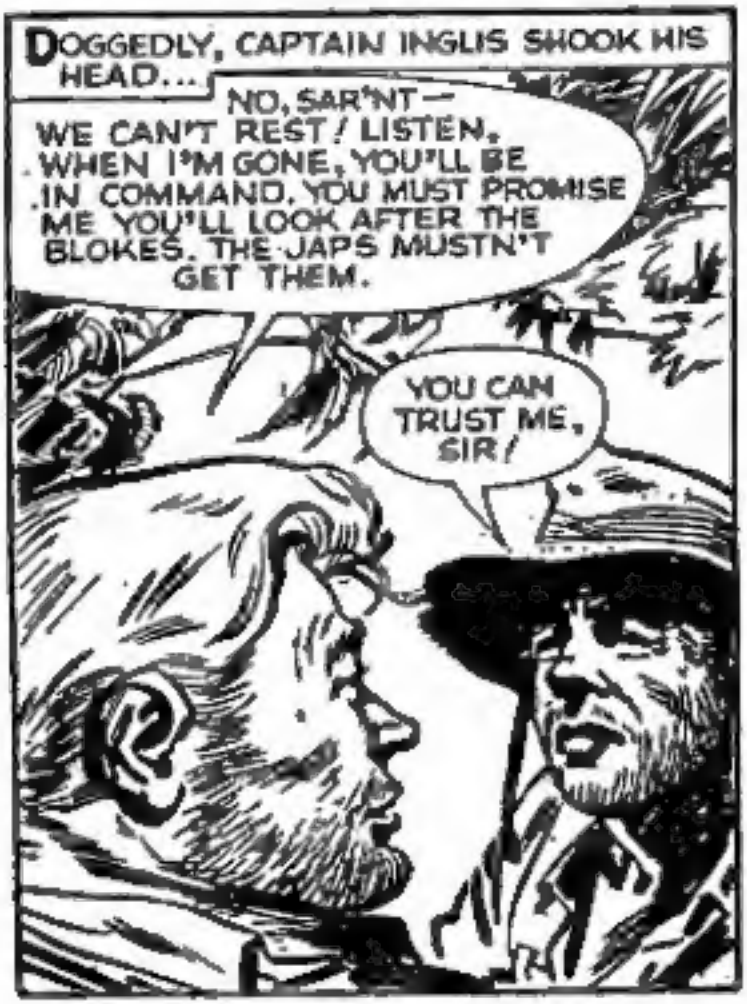
Chapter 1. Digger Column

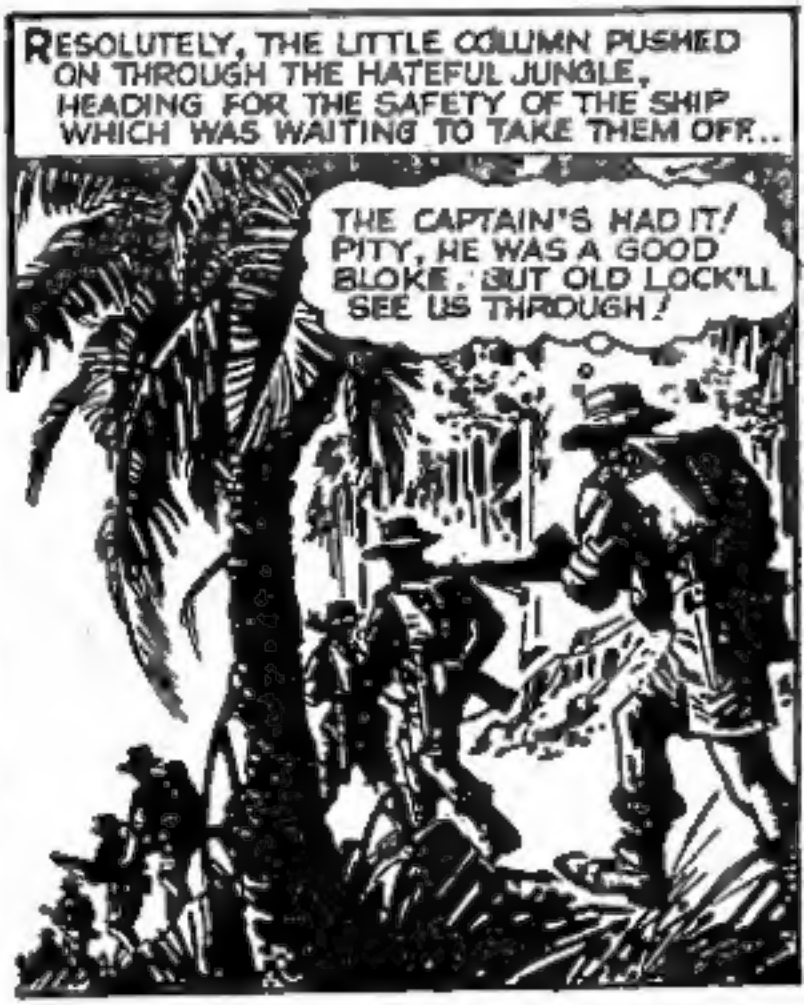
BUT THE HAIR-TRIGGER REACTION OF SERGEANT LOCK WAS FASTER THAN THEY EXPECTED...
I SEE YOU, NIPS! TAKE A TASTE OF THIS!

THE DEADLY ACCURATE BURST OF FIRE LASHED THE TREE TOPS LIKE A FIERCE GUST OF WIND.

No Retreat

THE WEAK VOICE OF THE SORELY WOUNDED OFFICER URGED THEM TO THEIR FEET AGAIN...
NICE SHOOTING, SAR'NT/ GET MOVING AGAIN, YOU BLOKES. WE'VE A LONG WAY TO GO...
TAKE IT EASY, SIR/ YOU NEED TO REST UP— THAT WOUND OF YOURS IS GETTING WORSE!


DOGGEDLY, CAPTAIN INGLIS SHOOK HIS HEAD...
NO, SAR'NT— WE CAN'T REST/ LISTEN. WHEN I'M GONE, YOU'LL BE IN COMMAND. YOU MUST PROMISE ME YOU'LL LOOK AFTER THE BLOKES. THE JAPS MUSTN'T GET THEM.
YOU CAN TRUST ME, SIR/


RESOLUTELY, THE LITTLE COLUMN PUSHED ON THROUGH THE HATEFUL JUNGLE, HEADING FOR THE SAFETY OF THE SHIP WHICH WAS WAITING TO TAKE THEM OFF...
THE CAPTAIN'S HAD IT/ PITY, HE WAS A GOOD BLOKE. BUT OLD LOCK'LL SEE US THROUGH!

MOST OF THE MEN OF THAT TOUGH COMPANY SHARED THAT VIEW...
HEY, LEFTY — RECKON OLD LOCK CAN SEE NIPS OUT OF THE BACK OF HIS HEAD/
HE'LL NEED TO IF WE'RE TO GET AWAY/ THIS HAS BEEN THE ROUGHEST RAID I'VE EVER BEEN ON...

CORPORAL JACK TRAVIS STUMBLED ALONG AT THE REAR OF THE COLUMN, THE END MARKER, THE MAN IN THE DANGER SPOT.
WHEN THIS LITTLE LOT'S OVER I'LL JUST TAKE MY PENSION AND RETIRE. COR, MY FEET! THEY'RE KILLING ME!
THE ONLY WAY YOU'LL RETIRE, BURNSIE, IS WHEN THE WAR'S OVER AND WE ALL GO HOME — WHEN —

No Retreat

PRIVATE BURNS GRIMACED AT CORPORAL TRAVIS'S WORDS. BURNS WAS THE COLUMN'S CLOWN, THE MAN WHO KEPT THE LAUGHS COMING AND MORALE HIGH. BUT RIGHT NOW, LAUGHS WERE NOT COMING EASILY.
OLD JACK'S ONE OF THE BEST... BUT HIS GO OF FEVER DRAGGED HIM DOWN! LET'S HOPE LOCK CAN GET US OUT OF THIS ALIVE!

BIG, GRAVEL-VOICED SERGEANT LOCK WAS GOING TO DO JUST THAT – OR KNOW THE REASON WHY...
KEEP MOVING, YOU BLOKES / WE'LL BIVVY DOWN IN A COUPLE OF HOURS. BUT RIGHT NOW WE'VE GOT TO OUTMARCH THOSE NIPS ON OUR TAIL! SO MOVE!

BUT THE JAPANESE PURSUERS WERE FRESH AND WELL FED, THEIR LUST FOR VENGEANCE DRIVING THEM ON REMORSELESSLY.
THESE TWO FOOLS WERE USELESS TO ME AND TO THE EMPEROR! THEY FAILED TO HOLD UP THE AUSTRALIAN DEVILS. BUT WE WILL CATCH THEM!

LIKE JUNGLE BLOODHOUNDS, THE WARRIORS OF YAMATO PADDED EAGERLY AFTER THE LURCHING, EXHAUSTED MEN OF THE SNAKE COLUMN...
HURRY! THEY ARE NOT FAR AHEAD! WE WILL STRIKE THEM THIS TIME WITH ALL OUR STRENGTH! NOT ONE WILL LIVE!

IN THE AUSTRALIAN COLUMN, A DOUBLE EMERGENCY STRUCK WITH UNEXPECTED SUDDENNESS...
I'VE HAD IT, SARGE! I CAN'T MARCH ANY MORE! I'M SLOWING YOU DOWN. YOUR ONLY CHANCE IS TO PUSH TO THE COAST AT TOP SPEED!
THAT'S NOT TRUE, SIR! THE JAPS WILL CATCH UP WITH US IN OUR PRESENT STATE, EVEN IF WE GO AS FAST AS WE CAN. WE'RE NOT LEAVING YOU!

No Retreat

BUT CAPTAIN INGLIS WAS A MAN OF SINGLE-MINDED PURPOSE...
I'M STILL IN COMMAND, SERGEANT / I SHALL STAY HERE. NO JAPS WILL PASS WHILE I'M STILL ALIVE. IT'LL GIVE YOU AND THE BLOKES A CHANCE — A SLENDER ONE...
NO!
I'LL STAY, TOO! GIMME YOUR TOMMY GUN, SMITHY. WE'LL KNOCK OFF A FEW JAPS BEFORE THEY GET US!

THERE WAS NOTHING ELSE SERGEANT LOCK COULD DO. WITH A HEAVY HEART, HE TOOK A LAST FAREWELL OF THE BEST OFFICER HE HAD KNOWN...
TAKE A FEW OF THE NIPS FOR ME, SIR — AND YOU, TOO TOMPKINS. GOOD ON YER, MATES!
YOU'RE IN COMMAND NOW, LOCK. ALWAYS REMEMBER— *YOUR MEN COME FIRST!* THEY'VE DONE A FINE JOB — AND THEY DESERVE THE BEST YOU CAN GIVE THEM!

THE COLUMN HAD COVERED TWO PAINFUL MILES WHEN THE DISTANT SOUND OF GUNFIRE REACHED THEIR STRAINING EARS.
THE JAPS HAVE CAUGHT UP WITH THEM!
HARK AT THOSE TOMMY GUNS! THE CAPTAIN AND TOMPKINS ARE REALLY HANDING IT OUT!
YEAH — AND THEY'RE TAKING IT, TOO, I'LL BET!

THE STARK MEANING OF THAT DISTANT SHOOTING BROKE THE NERVE OF LANCE-CORPORAL SMITHERS..
NO! NO! I CAN'T TAKE ANY MORE. I MUST GET AWAY! AWAY!
SMITHERS! COME BACK HERE, YOU FOOL! HOW FAR D'YOU THINK YOU'LL GET ON YOUR OWN!

BUT SMITHERS, THE GRUMBLER AND WHINER OF THE COLUMN, WAS PAST LISTENING TO REASON...
LEMME GO! LEMME GO! I'VE HAD ENOUGH!
SO HAVE WE ALL, SMITHY! NOW SIMMER DOWN — OR I'LL SLAP YOU ONE!

AS THEY PLODDED ON, THE RATTLE OF GUNFIRE STILL REACHED THEM, THOUGH FAINTER ALL THE TIME
THOSE JACKAROOS ARE STILL FIGHTING! HECK! I WISH I COULD BE WITH THEM!

THE TOMMY GUNS OF CAPTAIN INGLIS AND TOMPKINS WERE ALMOST RED-HOT AS THEY THREW BACK EVERY FRANTIC JAPANESE EFFORT TO SMASH THROUGH
THEY'RE WORKING AROUND OUR FLANKS, SIR!
IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME, LAD – BUT WE'VE GIVEN 'EM A FAIR OLD RUN FOR THEIR MONEY!

ENRAGED BY THIS DELAY, THE JAPANESE CAPTAIN FLUNG WAVE AFTER WAVE OF HIS MEN AGAINST THE TWO WOUNDED AUSTRALIANS.
BANZAI!

THE END WAS DESPERATELY NEAR
LOOK OUT, SIR!
GET HIM, TOMPKINS— I'LL TAKE THE OTHER!

BUT AS CAPTAIN INGLIS RAISED HIMSELF FOR A MOMENT FROM COVER, RETURN FIRE SCYTHED INTO THE GALLANT AUSTRALIANS
GOT YOU — AARGH!

THEN THE JAPANESE WERE THROUGH IN A FIERCE, TRIUMPHANT RUSH
THOSE TWO AUSTRALIAN DEVILS HAVE HELD US UP TOO LONG — WE MAY NOT EVEN CATCH THEIR FRIENDS NOW!

THE COLUMN OF DIGGERS STROVE TO QUICKEN THEIR PACE AS THE DISTANT TOMMY GUNS FELL SILENT
IT'S ALL OVER! THEY DID A GREAT JOB — GIVEN US A CHANCE TO REACH THE COAST!

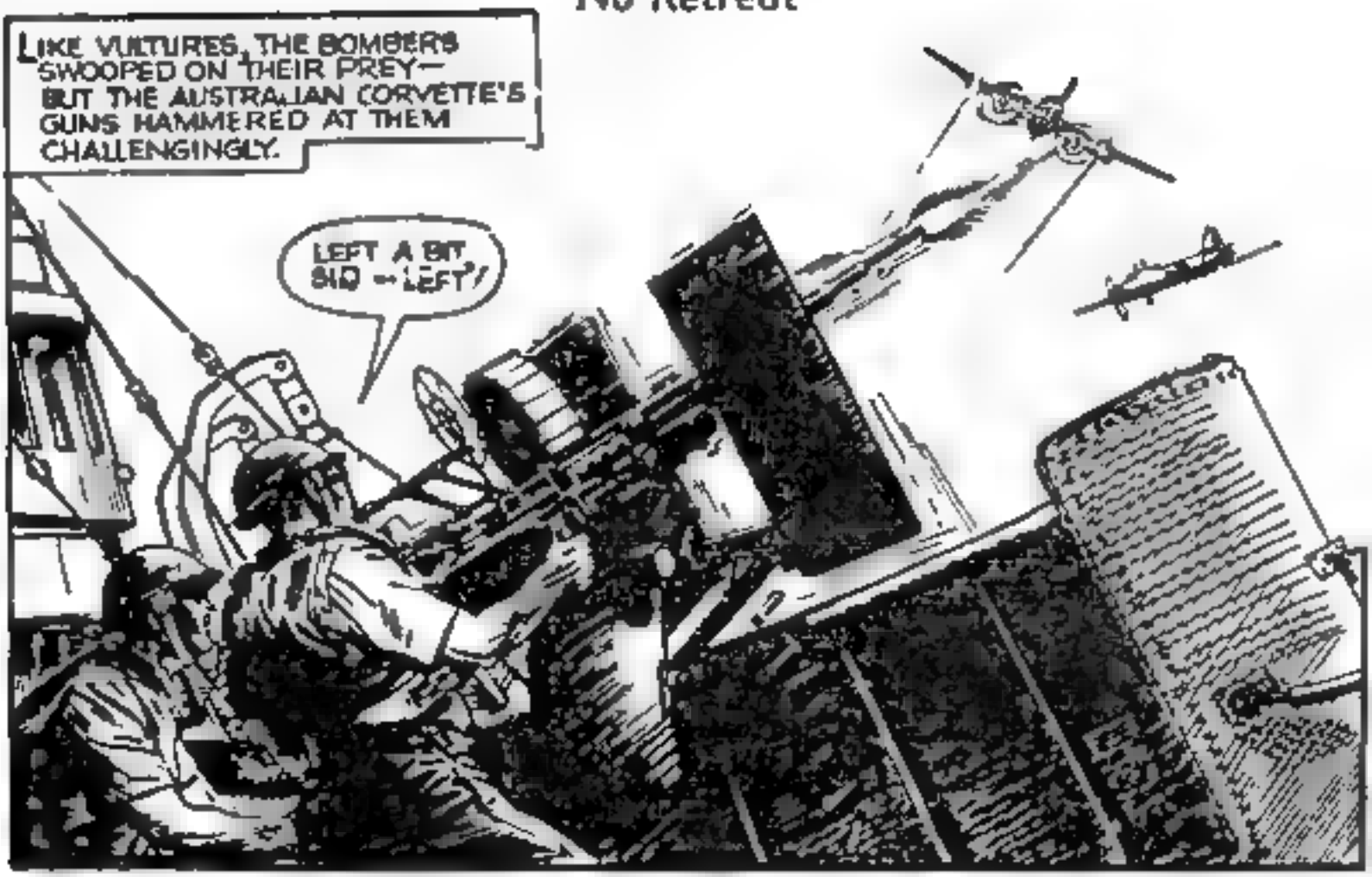
WE'RE GONNA REACH THE COAST TOUGHT ARSE! WE HAVEN'T COME ALL THIS WAY TO BE BEATEN NOW!
YOU CAN SAY THAT AGAIN, BLUEY!
THESE MEN ARE MY RESPONSIBILITY NOW... THEY'VE BEEN THROUGH AN ORDEAL FEW OTHER MEN WOULD HAVE SURVIVED THEY DESERVE THE BEST I CAN DO FOR THEM — AND I'M GOING TO SEE THEY GET IT!

No Retreat

BUT THAT UPLIFTING OF THEIR SPIRITS COULD NOT BANISH THE TERRIBLE PHYSICAL EXHAUSTION. CORPORAL TRAVIS WAS THE FIRST TO BREAK
UUUH! I'VE HAD IT – CAN'T GO ON...
HOLD UP, JACK! HEY, SOAMES – GIVE US A LIFT WITH JACK!
IF A MAN CAN'T WALK OUT ON HIS OWN TWO FEET THEN HE STAYS! YOU HELP HIM – I'M NOT!
PRIVATE BURNS STARED IN DISGUST AFTER THE SELFISH SOAMES, AND TOOK JACK TRAVIS'S WEIGHT ON HIS OWN SHOULDERS
COME ON, JACK! WE'RE GONNA MAKE IT, SPORT. THE COAST CAN'T BE FAR OFF NOW!
NO, BURNSIE – YOU'LL WEAKEN YOURSELF. GO ON – LEAVE ME HERE!
SOMEHOW, THAT PITIFUL LITTLE COLUMN STRUGGLED AND FOUGHT THEIR WAY THROUGH THE LAST STRETCH OF JUNGLE THAT SEPARATED THEM FROM THE SEA...
THERE SHE IS, BLOKES – THE SEA!
WE'VE DONE IT!

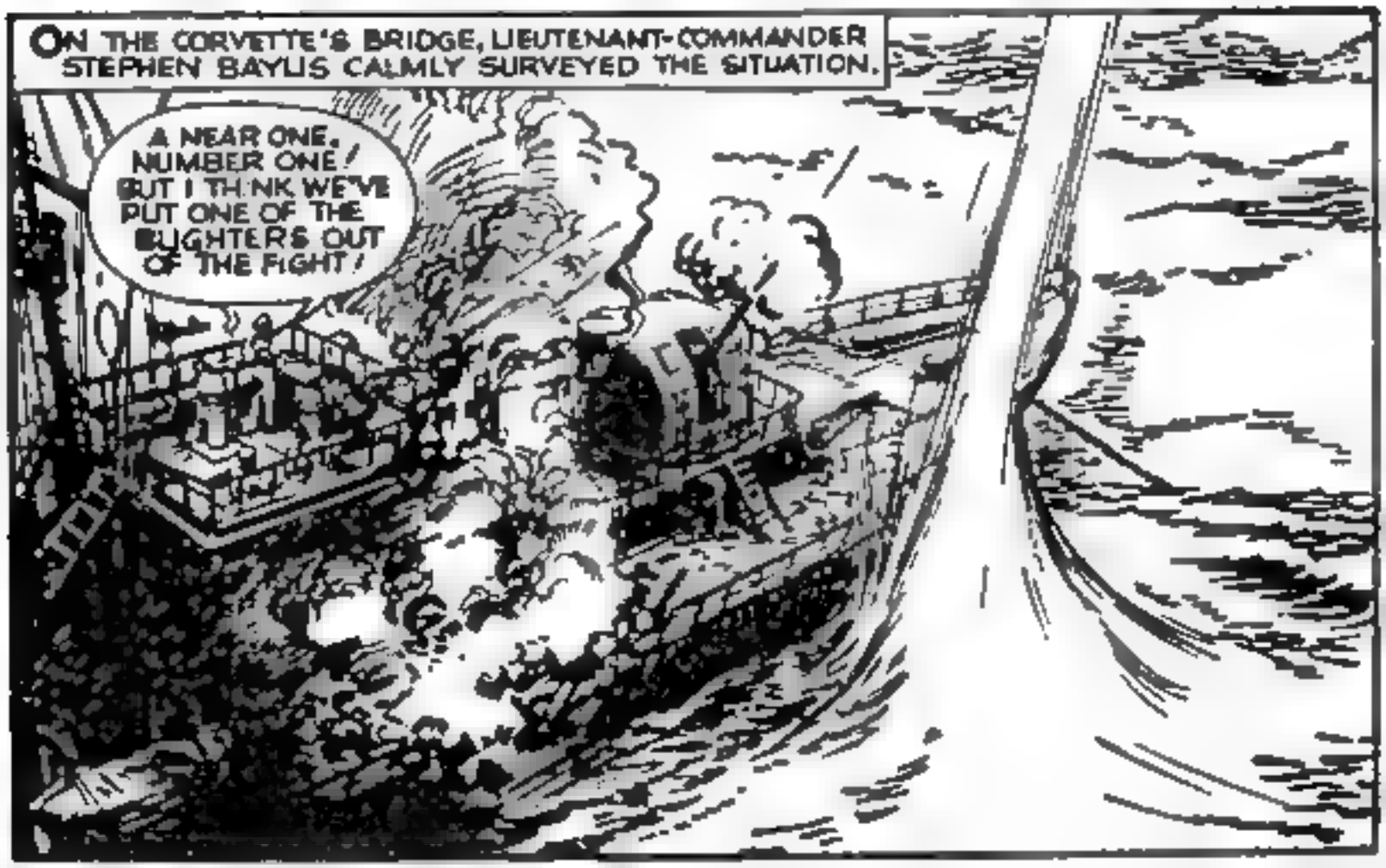
LYING AT ANCHOR IN THE LITTLE BAY WAS A NAVAL CORVETTE, TRIM OF LINE AND LOOKING SO PEACEFUL ON THE CLEAR BLUE SEA
AS SOON AS WE'RE ABOARD WE CAN REST. BY HECK, YOU BLOKES HAVE EARNED IT!

AND THEN THE IMPERIAL JAPANESE AIR FORCE TOOK A HAND IN THE PROCEEDINGS.
AN AUSTRALIAN SHIP! A PRIME TARGET! WE ATTACK TOGETHER— AND SINK HER!
ENEMY AIRCRAFT! LOW GREEN TWENTY!


LIKE VULTURES, THE BOMBERS SWOOPED ON THEIR PREY— BUT THE AUSTRALIAN CORVETTE'S GUNS HAMMERED AT THEM CHALLENGINGLY.
LEFT A BIT, SID — LEFT!

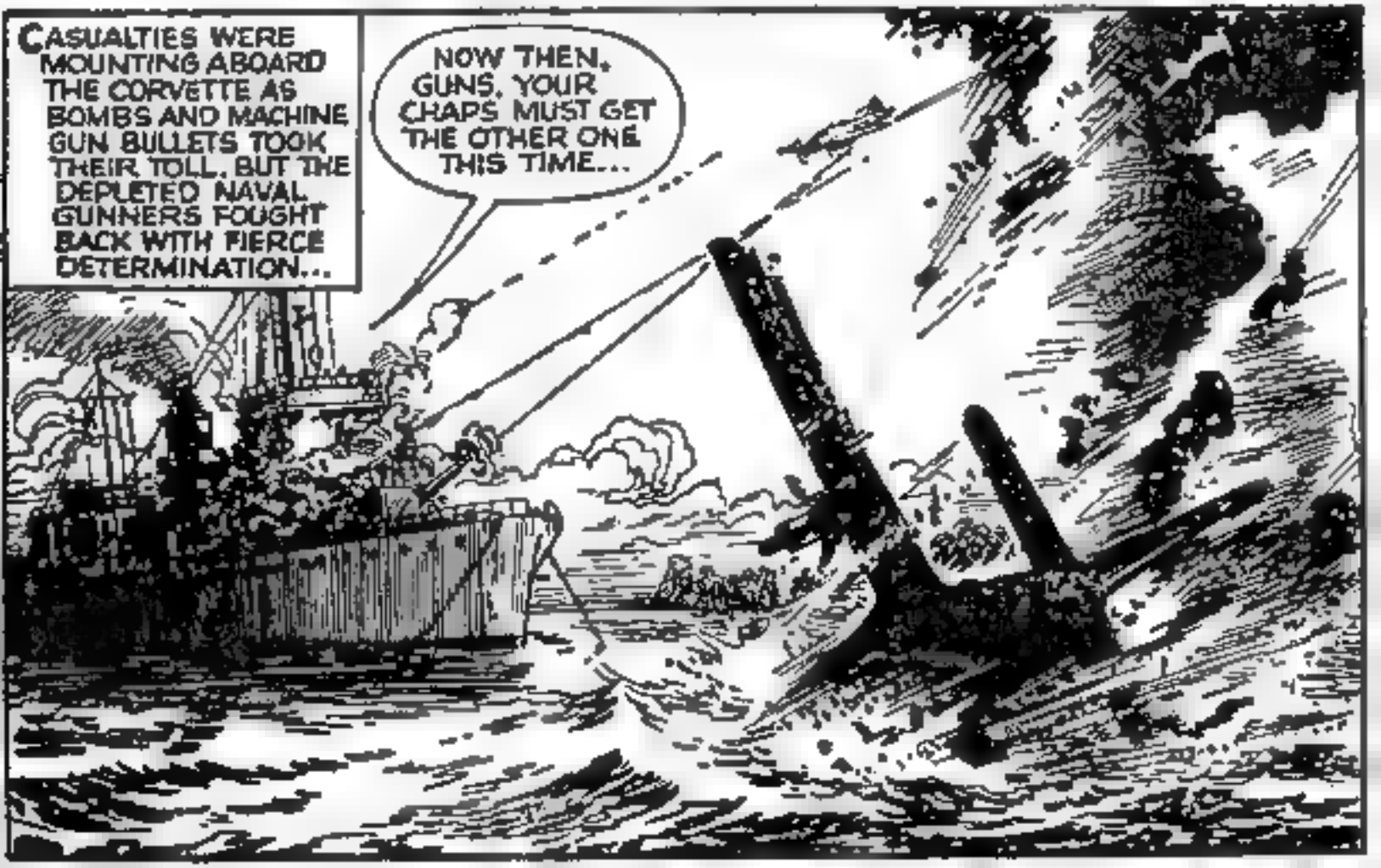
THE BOMBS PLUMMETED DOWN— ONE, TWO, THREE IN THE SEA — AND THE FOURTH ON THE CORVETTE'S DECK. THE OERLIKON AND ITS CREW CEASED TO EXIST.

ANOTHER HIT WAS REGISTERED — ON THE PORT SIDE THIS TIME, BUT THE BOMBER ITSELF DID NOT FLY AWAY UNSCATHED...


ON THE CORVETTE'S BRIDGE, LIEUTENANT-COMMANDER STEPHEN BAYLIS CALMLY SURVEYED THE SITUATION.
A NEAR ONE, NUMBER ONE! BUT I THINK WE'VE PUT ONE OF THE BUGHTERS OUT OF THE FIGHT!

No Retreat

FROM THE HILLSIDE, THE WEARY AUSTRALIANS WATCHED THE VIOLENT ACTION WITH ALMOST HOPELESS RESIGNATION...
IF THAT SHIP CAN'T KNOCK OFF THOSE NIP PLANES, WE'VE ALL HAD IT! THEY'VE JUST GOT TO DO IT!


CASUALTIES WERE MOUNTING ABOARD THE CORVETTE AS BOMBS AND MACHINE GUN BULLETS TOOK THEIR TOLL. BUT THE DEPLETED NAVAL GUNNERS FOUGHT BACK WITH FIERCE DETERMINATION...
NOW THEN, GUNS, YOUR CHAPS MUST GET THE OTHER ONE THIS TIME...

IT WAS A DUEL TO THE DEATH— A DUEL THAT THE JAPANESE LOST.

THE BATTLE WAS OVER — FOR THE MOMENT — AND AT ONCE, LIEUTENANT-COMMANDER STEPHEN BAYLIS BEGAN TO ISSUE COLD, PRECISE ORDERS.

ALL CASUALTIES BELOW. NUMBER ONE, DAMAGE REPORT IN HALF AN HOUR. GUNS — REDISTRIBUTE YOUR REMAINING CREWS. WE MAY BE IN ACTION AGAIN IN FIVE MINUTES...

ALTHOUGH THE SAILORS KNEW THEIR SKIPPER WELL, H.S COLD-BLOODED EFFICIENCY NEVER CEASED TO INFURIATE THEM

'ARK AT THE SKIPPER / A BLINKIN' CALCULATING MACHINE, 'E IS /

AYE / JUST NUMBERS IN HIS LITTLE BOOK, WE ARE /

THANKFUL THAT THE SHIP ON WHICH THEIR HOPES OF SAFETY RESTED WAS SAFE, THE MEN OF THE AUSTRALIAN COLUMN BOARDED HER, EXPECTING A REST AT LAST FROM THEIR ORDEAL...
SERGEANT! WHERE ARE YOUR OFFICERS? LOOK AT THE FILTHY MUD YOU ARE BRINGING ON MY DECK!
OUR OFFICERS ARE ALL DEAD — I'M IN COMMAND! WE'VE MARCHED A LONG WAY, THROUGH MUD — SIR!

THAT WAS THE BEGINNING. AFTER TWO DAYS OF STRICT DISCIPLINE AND LITTLE REST, THE SOLDIERS WERE CLOSE TO MUTINY...
HE'S A FAIR TARTAR! NOTHING WE DO IS RIGHT! YOU'D THINK WE WERE CONVICTS!
TOO RIGHT! THIS FELLER BAYLIS AIN'T HUMAN!
I'M STILL RESPONSIBLE FOR YOU BLOKES — AND WE'RE NOT GETTING A FAIR DEAL ABOARD THIS TUB. I'M GOING TO SEE THIS LIEUTENANT-COMMANDER, RIGHT NOW!

BUT BAYLIS RECEIVED HIM COLDLY...
WE APPRECIATE YOU PULLED US OUT OF THE JUNGLE, SIR. BUT MY MEN ARE WORN OUT. THEY NEED REST — NOT THE ETERNAL DISCIPLINE YOU KEEP RAMMING DOWN THEIR THROATS!
THAT IS ENOUGH, SERGEANT. I AM IN COMMAND OF THIS SHIP — NOW GO BELOW!

DESPERATELY LOCK TRIED TO STATE HIS CASE
BUT YOU DON'T —
THERE IS A WAR ON, SERGEANT OR HAD YOU FORGOTTEN? I'VE HAD ORDERS TO RE-ROUTE YOU AND YOUR MEN THE JAPS ARE TRYING AN INVASION AND WE NEED EVERYONE TO STOP THEM...

THAT WAS THE LAST STRAW — THE FINAL HUMILIATING INSULT.
THEY WANT US TO GO INTO ACTION AGAIN? BUT WE'RE NOT FIT.
WE COULDN'T FIGHT A TEN-YEAR-OLD / WE'D BE USELESS IN A REAL FIGHT RIGHT NOW!
THERE IS ONLY ONE THING LEFT FOR US TO DO, BLOKES. IF YOU'RE WITH ME — WE'LL DO IT!
AUSTRALI

No Retreat

WHEN SERGEANT LOCK DETAILED HIS PLAN, A HUSHED SILENCE GREETED HIM. THEN SMITHERS AND SOAMES BROKE ANGRILY INTO EXCITED WORDS...
IT'S THE ONLY WAY, SARGE! WE'VE HAD ALL TH'S WAR CAN DISH OUT!
YEAH, THE SHIP'S UNDERMANNED! THIS COCKY BAYLIS CAN'T STOP US!

BAYLIS AND THE SURVIVING MEMBERS OF HIS CREW HAD NO CHANCE AGAINST THE TOUGH [redacted] VETERANS OF THE AUSTRALIAN COLUMN...
OUTTA THE WAY, SAILOR BOY!
WE'RE TAKING OVER! I'M LOOKING AFTER MY MEN FIRST AND TO BLAZES WITH EVERYTHING ELSE!
YOU FOOLS! STUPID FOOLS!

Chapter 2. Paradise Island

No Retreat

LIEUTENANT-COMMANDER BAYLIS COULD BARELY COMPREHEND WHAT HAD HAPPENED...
IF ONLY THE DELUDED IDIOTS COULD SEE WHAT THEY'RE DOING! DO THEY INTEND TO SPEND THE REST OF THE WAR ON THIS CONFOUNDED ISLAND?
THEY HAD A GENUINE GROUSE, SIR. BUT THIS WASN'T THE WAY TO STRAIGHTEN IT OUT!
BUT LOCK AND HIS MEN HAD NO DOUBTS THAT THEY HAD ACTED IN THE ONLY WAY POSSIBLE. EVEN CORPORAL JACK TRAVIS SHARED THAT VIEW.
FEELING BETTER NOW, JACK? THIS IS THE CURE YOU NEEDED!
YOU'RE LOOKING BETTER ALREADY, JACK!
THANKS TO YOU, BURNSIE. YOU DRAGGED ME OUT OF THAT DARNED JUNGLE — AND TO YOU, SARGE — YOU BROUGHT US TO THIS PLACE!
SLOWLY, AS THE DAYS PASSED IN SUNSHINE, THE MEN GREW BACK TO FULL HEALTH AND STRENGTH...
EVERY DAY I FEEL STRONGER. I'D SAY YOU SAVED ALL OUR LIVES BRINGING US TO THIS ISLAND, SARGE. WE'D NEVER HAVE LASTED ANOTHER PATROL!
THAT'S TRUE ENOUGH, JACK. BUT WHAT ABOUT THE FUTURE?
FUTURE? WE'LL MAKE OUR OWN FUTURE!

TO SERGEANT LOCK, THE MUTINY HAD BEEN AN INESCAPABLE EVIL TO PROTECT HIS MEN...
THAT'S WHAT I SAY! WE'VE NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT FOR A LONG TIME YET!
YOU TWO CORPORALS AND ME, THE SERGEANT, HAVE GOT TO LOOK OUT FOR THE BLOKES. IF THAT SAILOR BAYLIS HAD HIS WAY, WE'D ALL SWING AT THE YARD ARM!

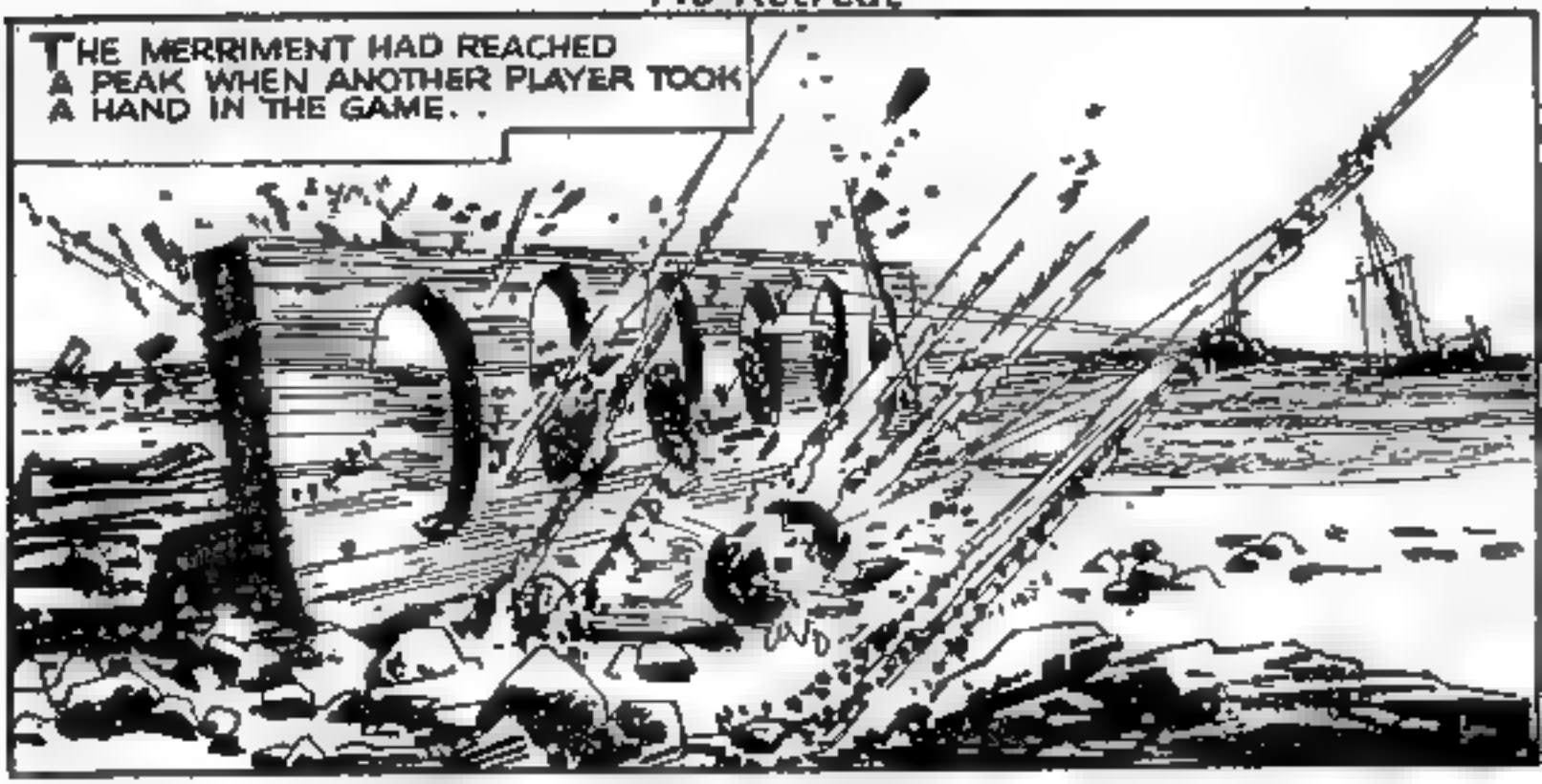
BAYLIS IS A RIGHT MARTINET, OF COURSE— BUT YOU CAN SEE HIS POINT OF VIEW. WHATEVER WE DO, WE MUSTN'T HARM HIM!
ALL WE WANT IS A BIT OF PEACE AND QUIET. BAYLIS WON'T COME TO ANY HARM.
HE WON'T IF HE BEHAVES HIMSELF!

WHEN THE CRICKET MATCH BETWEEN THE ARMY AND NAVY WAS OVER, PRIVATE BURNS GOT INTO HIS STRIDE.
ROLL UP, ROLL UP! TRY YOUR LUCK AT THE GREAT BURNS COCONUT SHY! FIVE THROWS FOR A BAR OF CHOCOLATE. EVERY COCONUT A PRIZE — ROLL UP!
GIVE US ONE HERE, BURNSIE .. I'LL HAVE A GO!

No Retreat

AMID LAUGHTER AND CATCALLS, THE GREAT BURNS COCONUT SHY DID A ROARING BUSINESS.
GAH! MISSED AGAIN!
NOW YOU KNOW WHY LEFTY'S NUMBER TWO ON THE GREN, BLOKES. HE'S CROSS-EYED!
HAVE ANOTHER GO, LEFTY! YOU'LL MAKE MY FORTUNE!

WATCHING HIS MEN ENJOYING THEMSELVES, SERGEANT LOCK FELT A GREAT SWELL OF PRIDE AND PLEASURE. HE FELT A FATHER TO EVERY ONE OF THEM ..
I'M DOING MY JOB! I'M KEEPING THE BLOKES ALIVE AND HAPPY. THAT'S WHAT CAPTAIN INGLIS TOLD ME TO DO!

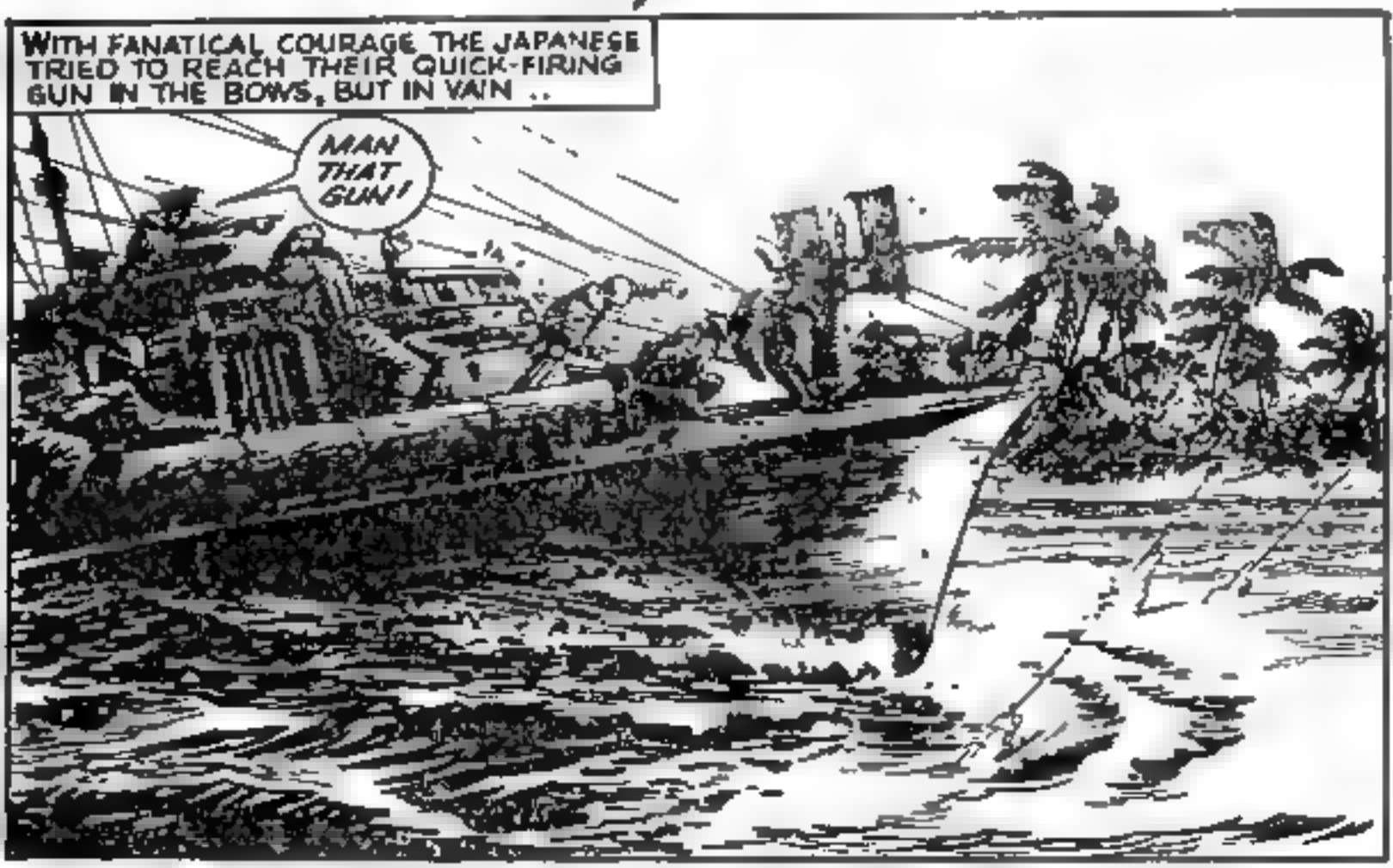

THE MERRIMENT HAD REACHED A PEAK WHEN ANOTHER PLAYER TOOK A HAND IN THE GAME..

DUMBFOUNDED AT THE SUDDEN CRASH OF MACHINE GUN FIRE, THE AUSTRALIANS STARED IN ALARM OUT TO SEA. ARROWING TOWARDS THEM WAS A JAPANESE TORPEDO BOAT...
THE FOOLS ARE ASLEEP OR PLAYING GAMES! KILL THEM ALL!

BUT JUNGLE TRAINED REFLEXES WERE ALREADY FUNCTIONING—THE AUSTRALIANS WERE FINDING COVER—FAST!
TWISTING, SNEAKY JAPANESE? GRAB YOUR GUNS, BLOKES / CORPORAL EVANS TAKE A SECTION AROUND THE FLANK. THOSE JAPANESE MUSTN'T GET AWAY FROM THIS ISLAND ALIVE!
AAAGH!

FIERCELY ACCURATE FIRE POWER LASHED AT THE ENEMY VESSEL..
THAT'S THE STUFF! NAIL 'EM QUICK BEFORE THEY CAN TURN AWAY!

THE AUSTRALIANS WERE FIGHTING FOR THEIR ISLAND PARADISE NOW.
IF THEY GET AWAY THEY'LL BRING THE WHOLE JAPANESE FLEET ON US!
THEY WON'T GET AWAY — CORPORAL EVANS WILL SEE TO THAT! KEEP FIRING!


WITH FANATICAL COURAGE THE JAPANESE TRIED TO REACH THEIR QUICK-FIRING GUN IN THE BOWS, BUT IN VAIN ..
MAN THAT GUN!

MEANWHILE, CORPORAL EVANS WAS TAKING HIS MEN IN A QUICK DASH THROUGH THE PALMS TO THE FLANK POSITION..
SNAP IT UP THERE, YOU BLOKES! IF THAT LAUNCH GETS AWAY, WE'RE DONE FOR!
NO-ONE'S GOING TO MESS UP OUR LIFE ON THIS ISLAND! NOT IF I CAN H&LP IT!

ABOARD THE JAPANESE LAUNCH FRANTIC EFFORTS WERE BEING MADE TO SWING HER OFF THE SHORE...
HURRY! THE AUSTRALIAN DEVILS ARE FARTHER ALONG THE BEACH, TOO! HURRY!
HIT 'EM HARD, BLOKES! WE'VE GOT 'EM COLD!

DEADLY AUSTRALIAN CROSSFIRE SPELT THE END OF THE JAPANESE SAILORS.
AND THAT'S YOUR LOT, MATE!
WE'VE DONE IT! THOSE NIPS WILL NEVER GIVE US AWAY NOW!

FLUSHED AND TRIUMPHANT, SERGEANT LOCK MADE A FIERCE PROMISE TO HIS MEN.
NO-ONE IS GOING TO MESS UP OUR NEW LIVES ON THIS ISLAND! THIS ISLAND IS OURS NOW! IF ANYONE TRIES ANYTHING - THEY'LL WIND UP LIKE THE JAPS— DEAD!

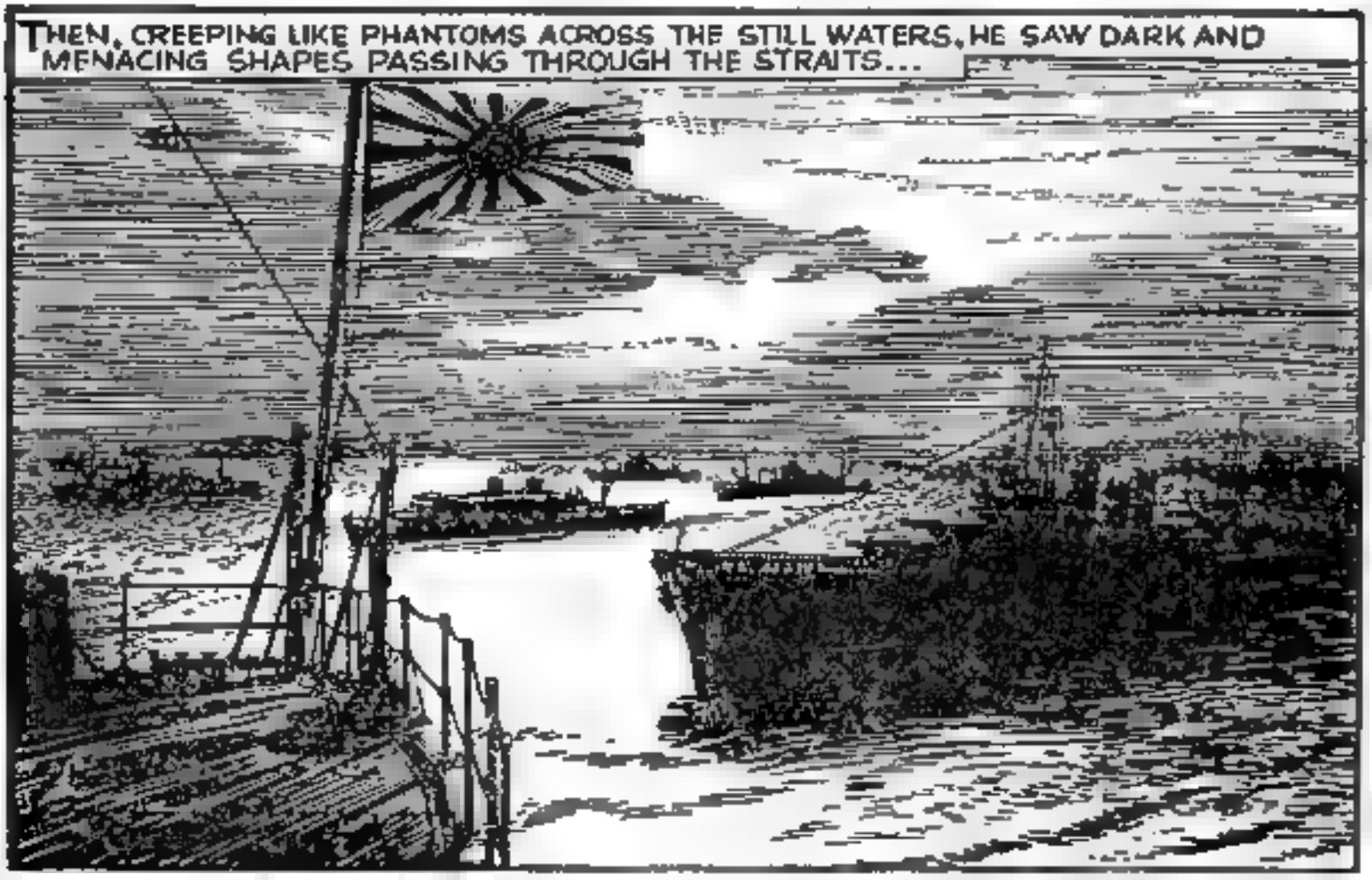
No Retreat

OUTSIDE THE STOCKADE HOLDING BAYUS AND HIS LOYAL MEN, ONLY ONE AUSTRALIAN FELT UNEASY ABOUT THE IDYLLIC LIFE ON PARADISE ISLAND...
WE'RE HAVING A WHALE OF A TIME – BUT MAYBE BECAUSE I FEEL BETTER NOW, I'M SEEING THINGS DIFFERENTLY. AFTER ALL – THERE IS A WAR ON!

RELUCTANTLY, JACK TRAVIS MADE UP HIS MIND TO SPEAK TO THE SERGEANT. HE KNEW IT WOULD BE A TOUGH INTERVIEW
LOOK, SARGE – OUR MATES ARE FIGHTING THE NIPS LET ME AND THE OTHERS WHO WANT TO, GET BACK INTO THE FIGHT
ARE YOU OFF YOUR CHUMP, JACK? WE CAN'T LET ANYONE LEAVE THIS ISLAND NOW. YOU KNOW THAT!

MOODILY, JACK TRAVIS WANDERED OFF ALONE.
I'VE GOT TO THINK THIS THING OUT. LOCK'S RIGHT IN A WAY - BUT, ALL THE SAME. .

LOST IN THOUGHT, HE ROUNDED THE CURVE OF THE ISLAND AND WAS SURPRISED TO FIND THE MAIN ISLAND CHAIN SO CLOSE...
HELLO! I DIDN'T REALISE WE WERE AS CLOSE TO THE MAIN ISLANDS AS THIS!


THEN, CREEPING LIKE PHANTOMS ACROSS THE STILL WATERS, HE SAW DARK AND MENACING SHAPES PASSING THROUGH THE STRAITS...

No Retreat

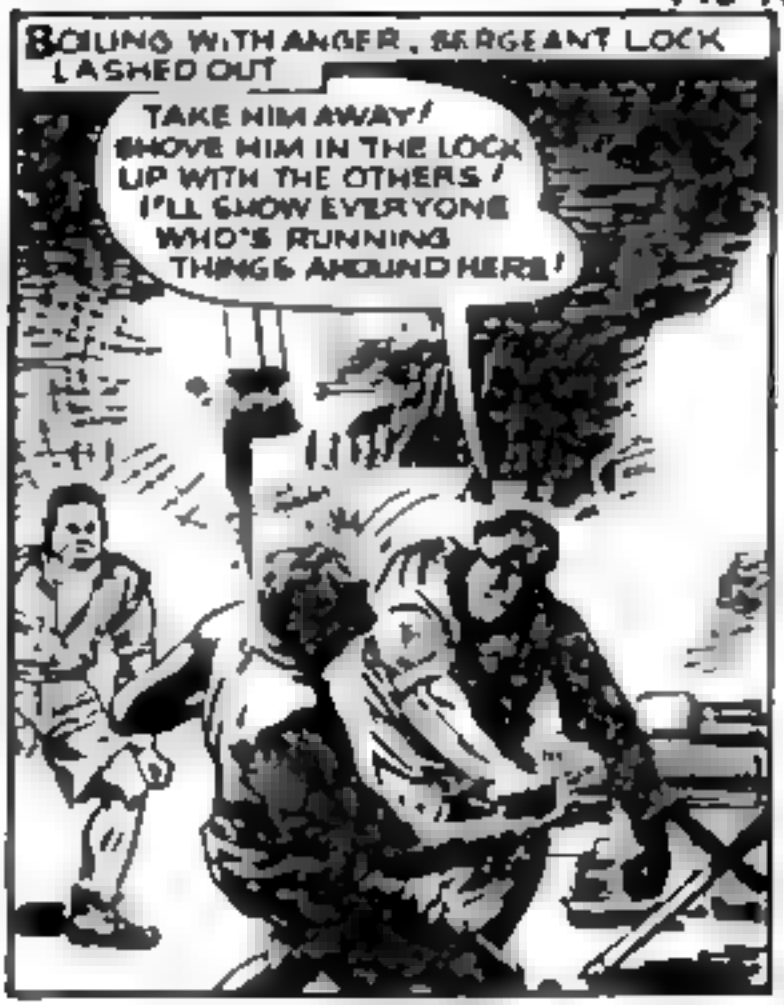
FOR LONG MOMENTS AS THE SUN SLID SWIFTLY INTO THE SEA, JACK TRAVIS STARED AT THAT DEADLY ARMADA OF JAPANESE SEA POWER
IT'S A JAP INVASION FLEET WE OUGHT TO WARN THE ALLIES — SOMEHOW!

HE RACED BACK TO THE CAMP WITH HIS NEWS
HEY, GARGE! BIG NEWS!
WHAT'S JACK [illegible] TO NOW? ONE THING'S CERTAIN... NO-ONE IS LEAVING THIS ISLAND!
TOO RIGHT, SPORT! WE DON'T WANT ANY MORE TO DO WITH THE PERISHING WAR!

BREATHLESSLY, TRAVIS POURED OUT HIS STORY...
A WHOLE FLEET! TROOP TRANSPORTS, TOO! WE'VE GOT TO WARN NAVY HEAD-QUARTERS ON THE RADIO!
YOU MUST BE LOSING YOUR MIND, JACK! IF WE SEND SO MUCH AS A PEEP ON THE RADIO, THE NAVY WILL COME NOSING AROUND. THEY'LL WANT TO KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO THEIR CORVETTE, WON'T THEY?

BUT DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND, LOCK? THOSE JAPS ARE GOING TO MAKE A FLANK ATTACK ON THE MAIN ISLANDS. THEY COULD ROLL OUR CHAPS UP—KICK THEM OFF! IT WOULD BE MURDER!
WE'VE HAD IT TOUGH, SPORT—NOW LET SOMEONE ELSE HAVE A GO, FOR A CHANGE!

TRAVIS TRIED TO ARGUE – UNTIL THE SERGEANT LOST HIS TEMPER
YOU'VE CHANGED, LOCK! YOU'RE NO LONGER FIT TO LEAD US, I RECKON...
LISTEN, WHO BROUGHT YOU OUT OF THE JUNGLE TO THIS CUSHY BILLET? ME! SERGEANT LOCK! WHAT I SAY, GOES! UNDERSTAND?


BOILING WITH ANGER, SERGEANT LOCK LASHED OUT
TAKE HIM AWAY! SHOVE HIM IN THE LOCK UP WITH THE OTHERS! I'LL SHOW EVERYONE WHO'S RUNNING THINGS AROUND HERE!

SMITHERS AND SOAMES WERE QUICKLY ON HAND TO CARRY OUT SERGEANT LOCK'S ANGRY ORDERS..
THIS IS THE BEST PLACE FOR THIS RAT HE DOESN'T KNOW WHEN HE'S WELL OFF!
WHAT'S ALL THIS ABOUT? WHO IS THIS?

IT WAS SOME TIME LATER WHEN JACK TRAVIS GROGGILY OPENED HIS EYES
OW! MY HEAD — LOCK DIDN'T HAVE TO HIT THAT HARD!
WHO ARE YOU? WHAT'S THIS ABOUT? I ANTICIPATED TROUBLE AMONG YOU MUTINEERS, AND TH S LOOKS TO BE THE START!

I'M CORPORAL JACK TRAVIS. LISTEN – THERE'S A BIG JAP TROOP CONVOY MOVING TO ATTACK THE MAIN ISLANDS. I SAW IT TONIGHT. WE'VE GOT TO TRY TO WARN THE ALLIES!
JAPS ATTACKING THE MAIN ISLAND CHAIN PAST HERE—YES, THAT IS VERY DANGEROUS. BUT HOW CAN WE WARN NAVAL HEAD QUARTERS?

JACK KNEW HE WAS TURNING TRAITOR ON HIS MATES – BUT HE HAD TO DO IT.
YOU DELUDED FOOLS HAVE SHUT THE LOYAL HANDS IN HERE. IF WE TRY TO GET OUT, WE'LL BE SHOT. THERE IS NO RADIO ..
YOU'RE WRONG! LOCK TOOK ONE RADIO SET FROM THE SHIP BEFORE HE SANK HER TO HIDE OUR TRACES. WE COULD USE THAT!

THE MEN IN THE STOCKADE WERE TIRED OF FRUSTRATION AND IDLENESS, AND THEY EAGERLY AGREED TO TRAVIS' PLAN.
THE SET IS IN A PALM HUT AT THE END OF THE CAMP. ONCE WE REACH IT WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO OPERATE IT WITHOUT TOO MUCH NOISE. BUT – HOW DO WE GET OUT OF HERE?
LEAVE THAT TO ME. I'VE NOT BEEN IDLE HERE.

BAYLIS WAS AS COOLLY CALCULATING AS EVER. AROUND THEM THE NIGHT PULSED WITH MENACE AS HE REVEALED HIS SECRET.
BUT WHY HAVEN'T YOU USED THIS BEFORE TO ESCAPE?
WHERE WOULD WE GO? YOU HAVE TO USE YOUR BRAINS IN WARFARE - IT'S NO GOOD BEING LIKE SERGEANT LOCK, ALL FIRE AND THUNDER AND STUPIDITY!

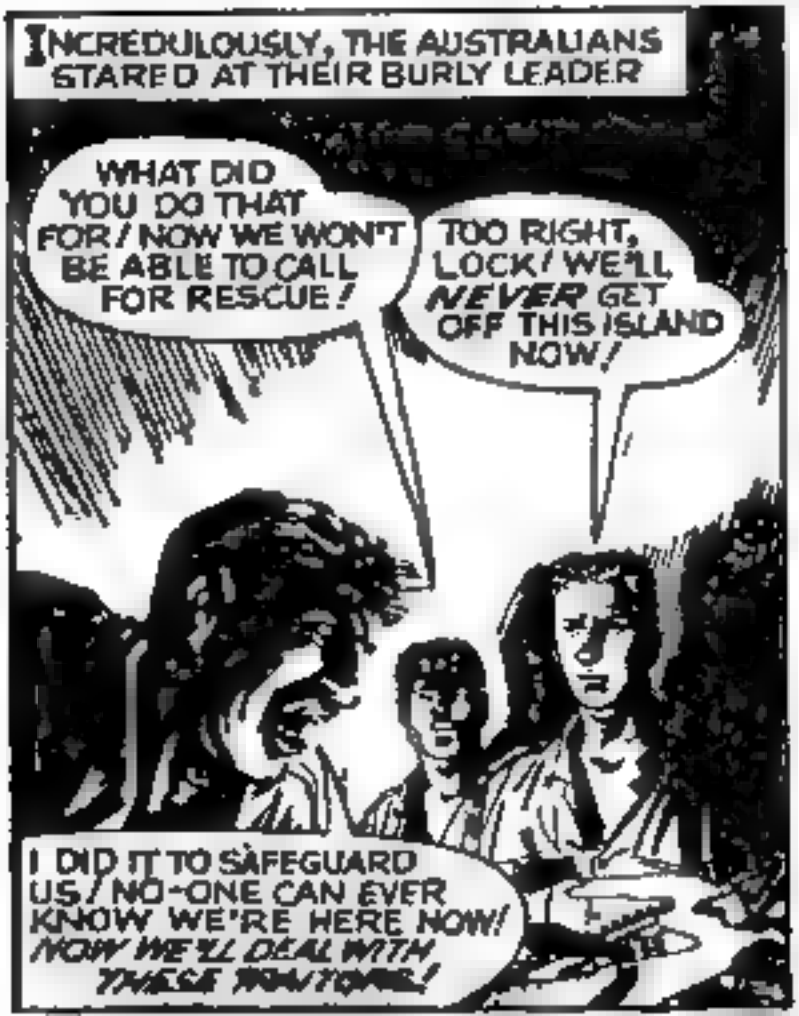
THEY TOOK A ROUNDABOUT WAY TO THE HUT HOUSING THE RADIO IT WAS UNOCCUPIED.
CAN'T YOU KEEP IT QUIETER? THEY'RE STILL MOVING ABOUT IN THE CAMP!
I'M BEING AS QUIET AS I CAN, SIR!
FIX A BLANKET UP AT THE DOORWAY!

AS TRAVIS MOVED TO OBEY, A SUDDEN SHOUT OF ALARM RANG THROUGH THE CAMP .
SOMEONE'S HEARD US! THEY'LL BE HERE WITH TOMMY GUNS NEXT! RUN FOR IT!
WHAT'S LOCK GOING TO SAY NOW?
CONFOUND IT! WE DIDN'T GET A SINGLE WORD THROUGH

BUT IT WAS TOO LATE FOR ESCAPE
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO WITH 'EM, LOCK?
YEAH, LOCK — THEY MIGHT TRY AGAIN..
FIRST, THEY WON'T DO IT AGAIN BECAUSE OF — THIS!

No Retreat

IN A SHATTERING BLAST OF NOISE AND FLAME, LOCK'S TOMMY GUN SMASHED THE RADIO SET INTO USELESS SPLINTERS.


INCREDULOUSLY, THE AUSTRALIANS STARED AT THEIR BURLY LEADER
WHAT DID YOU DO THAT FOR! NOW WE WON'T BE ABLE TO CALL FOR RESCUE!
TOO RIGHT, LOCK! WE'LL NEVER GET OFF THIS ISLAND NOW!
I DID IT TO SAFEGUARD US! NO-ONE CAN EVER KNOW WE'RE HERE NOW! NOW WE'LL DEAL WITH THESE TRAITORS!

THIS WAS NO LONGER THE SERGEANT OF THE JUNGLE PLATOON, ALERT AND EFFICIENT.
THEY TRIED TO TELL EVERYONE WHERE WE WERE! THEY TRIED TO BETRAY US! THERE'S ONLY ONE ANSWER TO THAT - THEY WILL BE SHOT - AT DAWN!

Chapter 3. Clash of Arms

AFTER A CAUTIOUS APPROACH TO THE NATIVES AS THEIR CANOES SLID ASHORE, LOCK GRINNED AT HIS MEN.
I CAN SPEAK THEIR LINGO A BIT. SEEMS THEY CLEARED OUT OF THEIR OWN ISLAND WHEN THE JAPS LANDED. THEY SURE DON'T LIKE THE NIPS!
WHO DOES? BUT I'M SURE GLAD THESE BLOKES ARE FRIENDLY. I DON'T LIKE THE LOOK OF THOSE SPEARS!

AND THEN TOUGH SERGEANT LOCK TURNED BACK TO THE PRESSING PROBLEM OF THE MEN WHO HAD TURNED TRAITOR. THE MEN WHO HAD WANTED TO GET BACK INTO THE WAR ..
BRING 'EM DOWN TO THE BEACH! THEY DESERVE ALL THEY'RE GOING TO GET FOR TRYING TO GIVE US AWAY!
WHAT'S GOT INTO YOU, LOCK? YOU CAN'T KILL US – IT'S JUST PLAIN MURDER!
SHUT UP, JACK TRAVIS – LOCK'S IN CHARGE HERE!

AS THE DOLEFUL GROUP WOUND DOWN TO THE BEACH, CORPORAL EVANS CALLED BLUEY AND LEFTY BURNS TO ONE SIDE...
THIS DON'T SEEM RIGHT – JACK IS OUR PAL!
TOO RIGHT, HE IS! OLD LOCK'S GOING TOO FAR THIS TIME ..
IF WE SAVE JACK, WE'LL GO AGAINST LOCK – YOU REALISE THAT? BUT I THINK LOCK'S WRONG!

THE DECISION WAS NOT AN EASY ONE FOR THE AUSSIES TO MAKE FOR SERGEANT LOCK HAD BECOME A FATHER FIGURE TO THEM...
COME ON, LOCK, LET'S GET RID OF THESE RATS!
I KNOW I'M DOING THE RIGHT THING HERE! BUT SOAMES AND SMITHERS, TWO OF THE WORST RATS IN THE COMPANY ARE MY CHIEF SUPPORTS. THE DECENT GUYS DON'T LIKE IT!

AND THAT WAS WHERE CORPORAL EVANS AND HIS FRIENDS TOOK A HAND...
THAT'S ENOUGH! NO-ONE'S GOING TO GET KILLED AROUND HERE! TAKE THEIR TOMMY GUNS.
SORRY, LOCK— BUT YOU CAN'T KILL JACK TRAVIS AND THE OTHERS IN COLD BLOOD.
YOU'LL SEE THINGS CLEARER LATER ON, SARGE!

LOCK LUNGED FORWARD ANGRILY...
LISTEN TO ME, CORPORAL— I'M IN CHARGE HERE! THESE TRAITORS WOULD HAVE DESTROYED YOU. I'M RESPONSIBLE FOR YOU BLOKES!
WE KNOW THAT, LOCK, AND WE APPRECIATE IT. BUT RIGHT NOW YOU'RE ALL TWISTED UP!

THEN, IN THAT MOMENT OF CHANGE, ALL DECISIONS WERE TAKEN OUT OF CORPORAL EVANS' HANDS...
SILENCE, EVERYONE! I'M TAKING CHARGE NOW! THIS ISLAND NEEDS A LITTLE SANITY — AND THEN PERHAPS WE CAN GET ON WITH THE WAR!

THERE WERE NO DOUBTS AS TO THE PROPER COURSE OF ACTION IN THE CALCULATING MIND OF LIEUTENANT-COMMANDER BAYLIS.
THERE IS A JAPANESE INVASION FLEET OFF THIS COAST — AND IT IS OUR DUTY TO ATTACK IT!
THAT'S MORE LIKE IT! WE'VE HAD ENOUGH OF THIS PARADISE ISLAND NOW IT'S TURNED SOUR ON US!

THE CAPTURED JAPANESE PATROL LAUNCH AND THE NATIVE CANOES WOULD HAVE TO DO DUTY FOR VESSELS OF WAR ..
WE'RE LEAVING YOU ON THIS ISLAND, SERGEANT — YOU AND THE OTHERS WE'LL SEND FOR YOU LATER
IT'S GOING TO WORK OUT, LOCK — BUT, RIGHT NOW, YOU WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND.

SO THAT GALLANT, SAVAGELY DETERMINED LITTLE ARMADA SAILED AWAY...
THE FOOLS! AFTER ALL I DID TO PROTECT THEM— NOW THEY'RE RUSHING OUT TO GET KILLED.

EVEN THE NATIVES WERE DESERTING PARADISE ISLAND IN THE R FEW REMAINING CANOES. SULLENLY, SMITHERS AND SOAMES WATCHED THEM GO...
THOSE FUZZIES SEEM HAPPY — AND SO THEY SHOULD BE WITH ALL THE STORES BAYLIS PAID THEM FOR THE CANOES! THEY'RE RICH!
YEAH — IF IT'D BEEN ME, I'D HAVE JUST TAKEN THE CANOES!

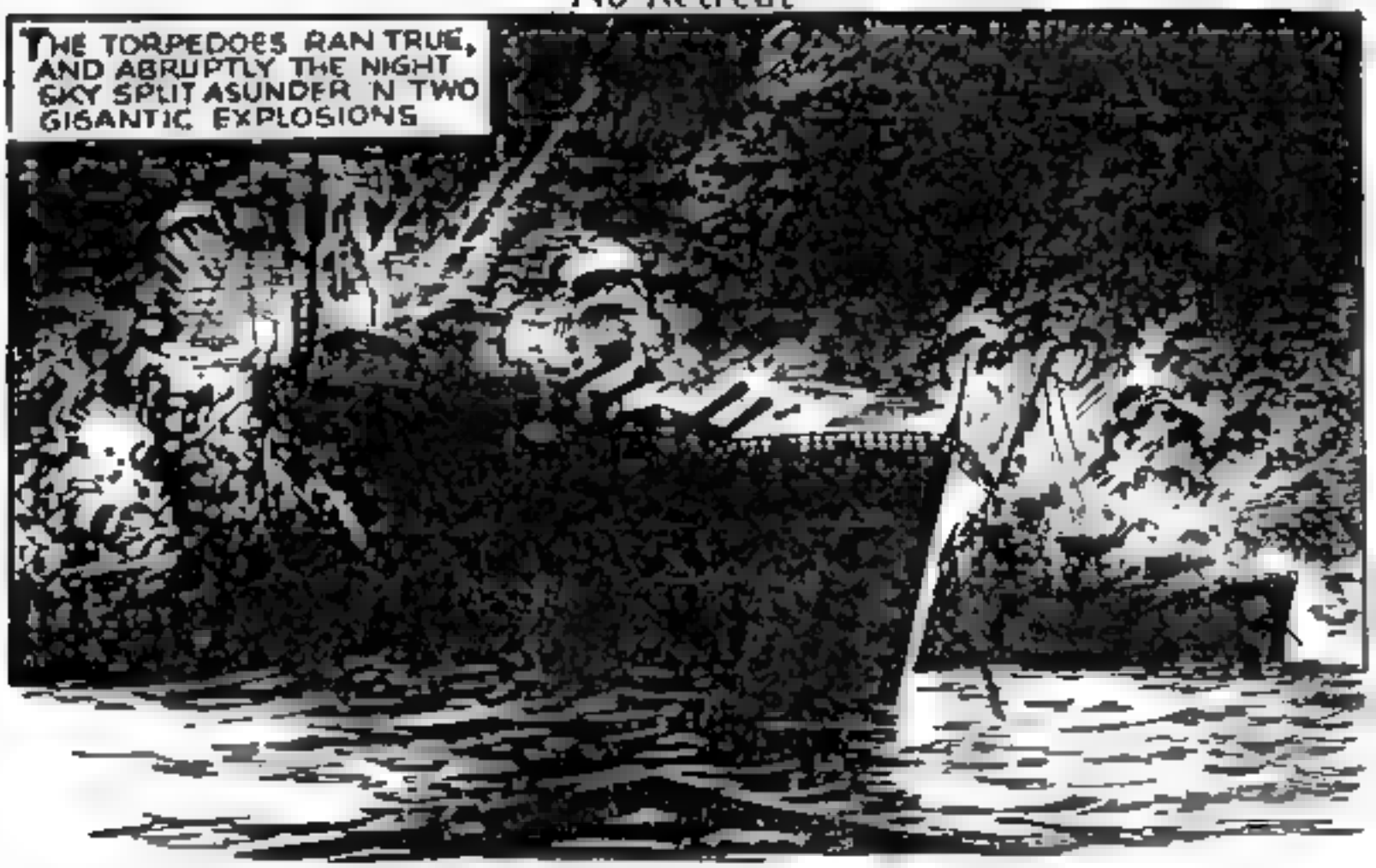
LISTENING TO THE SORT OF MEN WHO HAD SUPPORTED HIM, LOCK FELT RENEWED DOUBTS OF THE POSITION HE HAD TAKEN ..
THAT SOAMES WOULD STEAL A PENNY OUT OF A BLIND MAN'S CUP — AND SMITHERS IS WORSE. WHY DID JACK TRAVIS, AND EVANS AND BLUEY AND THE OTHERS TURN AGAINST ME? WHY? I DID EVERYTHING FOR THEIR GOOD!

LOCK SPENT A WRETCHED DAY, ROAMING ABOUT THE ISLAND, SURLY AND UNCOMMUNICATIVE. THEN JUST AS THE SWIFT TROPICAL DUSK WAS FALLING...
ANOTHER JAP LAUNCH! COME LOOKING FOR THEIR FRIENDS, HAVE THEY? WELL- MAYBE THEY'LL FIND MORE THAN THEY WANT!

AT THAT VERY MOMENT, THE PUNY AUSTRALIAN ATTACK FORCE SIGHTED THEIR TARGET...
THERE THEY ARE! YOU WERE RIGHT, CORPORAL- AND THERE'S A DEVIL OF A LOT OF 'EM, TOO!
THEY'RE GOING TO BE TOUGH CUSTOMERS. WE'LL LICK 'EM ALL RIGHT, THOUGH! BUT NOW I WISH LOCK WAS HERE!

AS DARKNESS CLOSED IN, THE CONVOY OF CANOES SPLIT UP AND EACH SELECTED ITS TARGET. STEALTHILY, THE AUSTRALIANS PADDLED INTO ACTION
WE'VE JUST GOT TO NOBBLE THESE JAPS! THERE WASN'T TIME TO WARN NAVY HEADQUARTERS. IT'S UP TO US NOW!
WE'LL SINK OR BURN 'EM ALL, CORPORAL BOY, OLD LOCK WOULD HAVE BEEN IN HIS ELEMENT HERE!

THE CAPTURED LAUNCH WAS TO STRIKE THE FIRST TWO-FISTED BLOW — WITH A TORPEDO ATTACK!
TINFISH RUNNING, SIR! BANG ON TARGET!
WHEN THE JAPS SUDDENLY HAVE TWO SHIPS BLOWN UP RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF THEIR CONVOY, FIREWORKS ARE LIKELY TO START!
YEAH — AND WE'LL BE IN THERE DISHING 'EM OUT!


THE TORPEDOES RAN TRUE, AND ABRUPTLY THE NIGHT SKY SPLIT ASUNDER 'N TWO GIGANTIC EXPLOSIONS

THE LAUNCH TOWING THE CANOES OF TOUGH AUSTRALIAN FIGHTING MEN WAS ALREADY HEADING TOWARDS THE NEAREST ENEMY DESTROYER.
TAKE US ALONGSIDE, HELMSMAN! WE'RE GOING TO CUT OUT THIS DESTROYER!
AUSTRALIAN DEVILS! PREPARE TO REPEL BOARDERS!

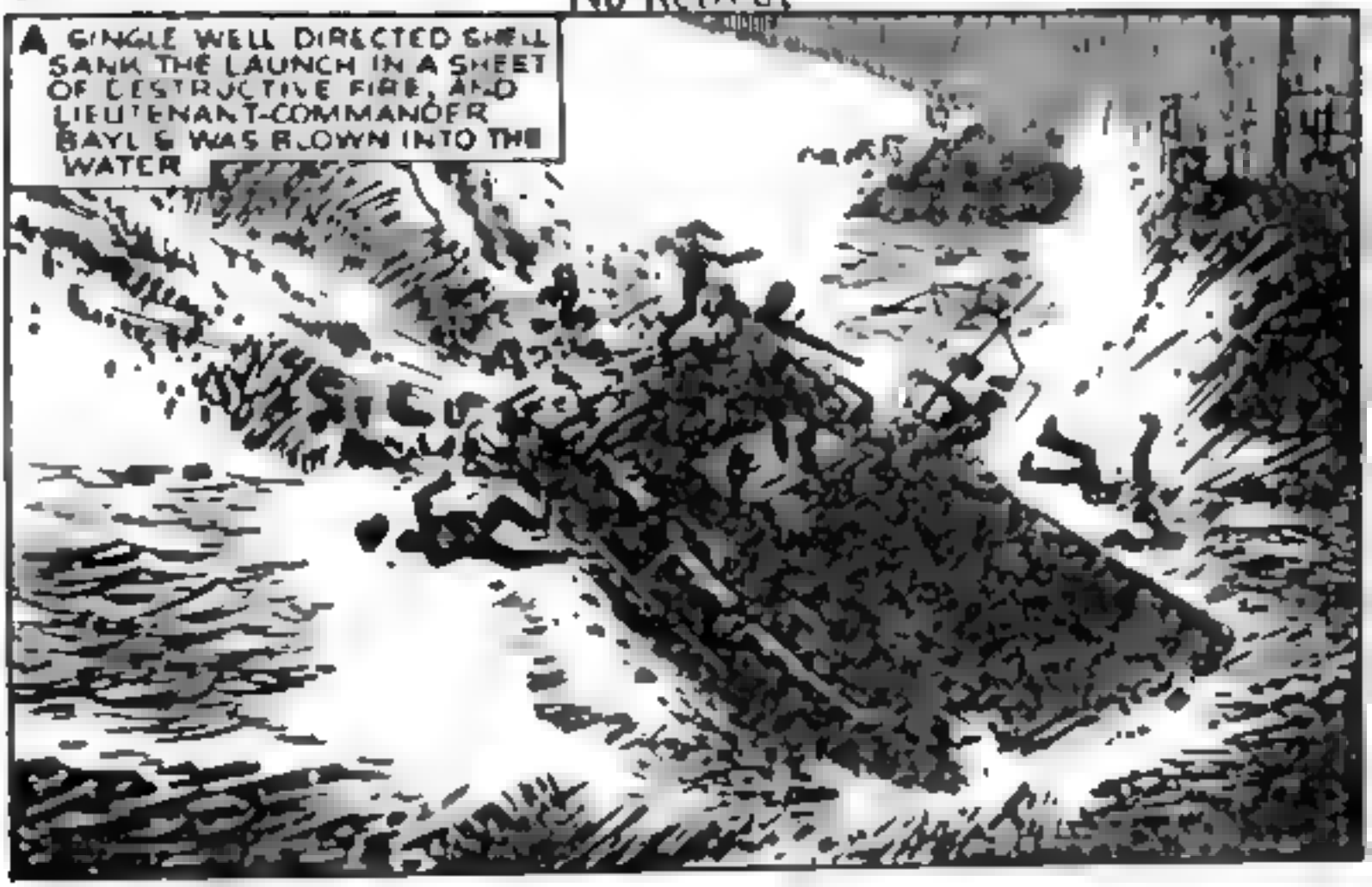
THEN THE VETERANS OF THE JUNGLE WERE SWARMING ABOARD THE JAPANESE WARSHIP.
HIT 'EM HARD, YOU BLOKES! WE'VE BEEN WAITING TOO LONG FOR THIS!

MURDEROUS HAND-TO-HAND COMBAT RAGED ALL OVER THE DESTROYER'S DECK AS THE AUSTRALIANS STROVE TO BATTER A PATH TO THE BRIDGE.

BUT THE JAPANESE SAILORS, ALL THE TIME BEING REINFORCED BY MEN FROM BELOW DECKS, FOUGHT BACK WITH FANATICAL INTENSITY.
LEFTY! LOOK, JACK, THE RATS HAVE GOT LEFTY! THEY'LL PAY FOR THAT!
WE'VE GOT TO TAKE THIS SHIP! WE'RE DONE FOR IF WE DON'T!

THE WHOLE SITUATION WAS GOING WRONG FOR THE AUSTRALIANS. THEIR GALLANT ATTACK SEEMED DOOMED TO FAILURE ..
THERE ARE TOO MANY OF 'EM, JACK!
WE NEARLY DID IT! IT LOOKS AS IF WE'VE HAD IT THIS TIME, BLUEY!

No Retreat


A SINGLE WELL DIRECTED SHELL SANK THE LAUNCH IN A SHEET OF DESTRUCTIVE FIRE, AND LIEUTENANT-COMMANDER BAYLIS WAS BLOWN INTO THE WATER

THE SITUATION ON THE DESTROYER'S DECK WAS CRITICAL. THE JAPANESE HAD THE AUSTRALIANS CORNERED. A VICIOUS BARRAGE OF FIRE SOUGHT THEM OUT WITH HUNGRY FINGERS OF DEATH
IT WAS A GOOD EFFORT WHILE IT LASTED, JACK!
WE DON'T STAND A CHANCE NOW - AND IT'S ALL MY FAULT!

AT THAT CRITICAL MOMENT, A GRIM HULK OF A MAN SWUNG OVER THE SHIP'S RAIL, TOMMY GUN BLAZING AT THE STARTLED JAPANESE
A MIXED EXULTATION FILLED THE CORNERED AUSTRALIANS AS THEY RECOGNISED THAT FIGHTING FIGURE.
IT'S LOCK! ATTABOY, LANCE! WE'VE GOT 'EM COLD NOW!
WE CAN TAKE THE WHOLE PLUNGING FLEET WITH LOCK ABOARD!
QUIT THE YAPPING AND GET FIGHTING! I KNEW YOU MUGS WOULD NEED SOME HELP!

WITH SERGEANT LOCK AT THEIR HEAD, THE AUSTRALIANS STORMED INTO THE JAPANESE RESISTANCE, SWEEPING ALL BEFORE THEM...
CLEAR THE DECKS OF THE PERISHERS!
THIS IS LIKE OLD TIMES!

LIEUTENANT-COMMANDER BAYLIS REACHED THE SIDE OF THE DESTROYER AT THAT MOMENT OF VICTORY — AND OF TRAGEDY.
WE'VE LICKED 'EM, BLOKES— AAGH!
LOCK! YOU CAN'T BE HIT, LOCK— NOT NOW!
SO THE SERGEANT'S HAD IT! HE WAS MISGUIDED, BUT HE WAS A REAL LEADER. HIS MEN MEANT MORE TO HIM THAN ANYTHING.

WITH BAYLIS IN COMMAND OF THE DESTROYER THE AUSTRALIAN SAILORS SOON SWUNG THEIR CAPTURED JAPANESE GUNS INTO ACTION. BUT FOR LOCK THE END WAS VERY NEAR...
BAYLIS IS HITTING THE JAPS HARD, THEY DON'T KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENING – AND EVANS IS AMONG THE TRANSPORTS. YOU CAN'T LEAVE US NOW, LOCK!
I TOOK THAT LAUNCH FROM THE JAPS – ME AND SOME OF THE BLOKES WHO SAW WHERE I'D GONE WRONG IN THE END. I'M SORRY, JACK – BUT I THOUGHT I WAS DOING THE BEST FOR THE MEN!

ALL ACROSS THE ANCHORAGE, JAPANESE SHIPS WERE EXPLODING AND BURNING. BUT ON THE DECK OF THE CAPTURED DESTROYER, THESE THINGS MEANT LITTLE TO THE MEN AT SERGEANT LOCK'S SIDE...
HE'S DEAD! SERGEANT LOCK'S GONE AT LAST!
WE'RE ON OUR OWN NOW. BUT WE'LL NEVER FORGET HOW HE DID EVERY-THING A MAN COULD DO FOR US – AND MORE!

No Retreat

Printed in England by Messrs. Percy Brothers Ltd., Manchester 3, and published each month by Fleetway Publications Ltd., Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Advertisement Offices: Tallis House, Tallis Street, London, E.C.4. Second class postage paid at New York Post Office, New York. Sole Agents: Australasia, Messrs. Gordon & Gotch Ltd. South Africa, Central News Agency Ltd. Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, Messrs. Kingstons Ltd. WAR PICTURE LIBRARY is sold subject to the following conditions, that it shall not, without the written consent of the Publishers first given, be lent, resold, hired out or otherwise disposed of by way of Trade except at the full retail price as shown on the cover; and that it shall not be lent, resold, hired out or otherwise disposed of in a mutilated condition, or in any unauthorised cover by way of Trade; or affixed to or as part of any publication or advertising, literary or pictorial matter whatsoever. 3/3/64

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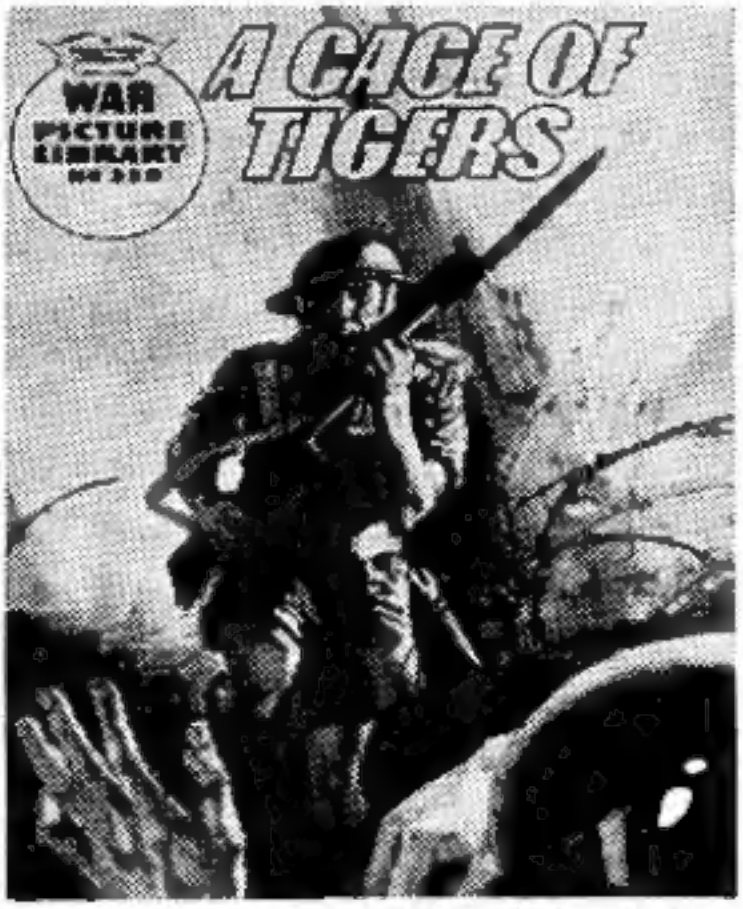

Again and again, the Nazi desert commando pierced the British line—they *had* to be destroyed, whatever the cost !

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